

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1358

By Winningham

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Helen Arms Wells on the celebration of her 100th birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Helen Arms Wells will celebrate her 100th birthday on December 7, 2010, a milestone that will be commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, the daughter of A.T. "Tommie" and Dayse Stone Arms and the sister of Alice Arms Overstreet, Edith Arms Bilbrey, Amos Arms, Laura Lee Arms Mayo, and Walter Arms, Helen Wells was born and raised in Clay County, where she remains a highly-respected member of the community; and

WHEREAS, for thirty-four years, Mrs. Wells served with acumen and alacrity as teacher, in which position she earned the respect of her peers and students alike for the exemplary quality of her work; and

WHEREAS, she began her career teaching first through eighth grades in a one-room schoolhouse; during her tenure there, she walked two miles to the rural school and served as its only teacher and custodian; and

WHEREAS, on April 10, 1936, Helem Arms was joined in marriage with her beloved husband, Dewey C. Wells, with whom she shared love and companionship until his death; though the couple never had biological children, they served as loving parents to Mrs. Wells's niece and nephew, Lura D. Arms Parsons and Walter Lee Arms, after the deaths of their mother and grandmother; and

WHEREAS, she is the doting grandmother of James Parsons, Robert Parsons, Amanda Parsons Jones, Bethany Arms Ellis, Walt Arms, and Andrew Arms, and the great-grandmother of Danielle Jones, Gabrielle Jones, Alec Parsons, Ian Parsons, Jackson Parsons, Isabella Parsons, and Luke Ellis; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the Church of Christ, Mrs. Wells has kept God as the center of her life; she has joined other Christians on two missionary journeys to England and has visited the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, always demonstrating a genuine love of others, Mrs. Wells is known for her smile, which has endured even through a great many trials and tribulations; and

WHEREAS, even after her retirement, Mrs. Wells stayed ready to serve in any way she could; when she was in her eighties, she joined her daughter, Lura, her grandson James, and other Tennessee Education Association members in a march from the Tennessee Education Building to the Tennessee Capitol Building, rallying for education funding; and

WHEREAS, renowned for her homespun wit and pithy advice, Mrs. Wells has mentored generations of her family and her students, encouraging and loving them as she taught them life's most valuable lessons; and

WHEREAS, her positive influence inspired a grateful former student, Roger Lee Scott, to dedicate a chapter in his book, *By the Water's Edge*, to her and to compare her to Mother Teresa; and

WHEREAS, as Helen Wells approaches her eleventh decade, she is still an active and productive member of society, participating in various civic and community events, as her health permits; she loves to travel, garden, and research history and genealogy, and has even taken nature study courses from Tennessee Tech in the years after her retirement; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Helen Arms Wells on the celebration of

her 100th birthday and extend to her our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.